# REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

*Mountaincering.* By C. T. Dent and others. (Longmans, Green, & Co.)

The publication of an authoritative manual is an epoch in the history of any pursuit. We have had abundance of narratives—geographical narratives, gastronomical narratives, gymnastic narratives, flippant narratives, but seldom narratives which are openly and confessedly didactic. Of course every paper is meant to teach us something, if it be only that one mountain is harder than another mountain, or one guide better than another guide, or the said guide's Herr a better man than the vast majority of other guides' Herren; but few writers have the courage to offer instruction in matters of practical Alpine detail. In fact, it may be said that every paper is written on the flattering assumption of absolutely perfect knowledge on the part of all who listen or read. This book, however, proceeds on the very opposite assumption. It treats the mind of the disciple as a *tabula rasa*, and for that reason is the more likely to be of service both to those who know something, and to those who know nothing, of the art. When it became known that Mr. C. T. Dent was engaged on a work of this kind there was joy in the hearts of all who take an interest in the sport. Such a work was greatly needed, and yet for its editor many qualities were required. Wide practical experience was not enough: literary skill was not enough. It was necessary to find a man who could in effect secure the direct or indirect co-operation of all leading modern mountaineers. As things are, we may say that subject and author are excellently matched. About half the book is written by the editor, and forms in itself a fairly complete treatise; it will, therefore, be convenient to dispose first of those portions which he has merely edited. Of introductory matter the reader gets plenty for his money. After a dedicatory preface by the Duke of Beaufort, and a preface by the general editor, and another by the special editor, and an eloquent benedictory preface by Mr. Justice Wills, we come to a long historical preface by Sir Frederick Pollock. New materials can hardly be expected nowadays, and most of this has already appeared either in Mr. Coolidge's book, or in the pages of the 'Journal,' but the different instances are here brought together in an interesting manner. There is, however, a fairly well-known passage in Sallust to which less than justice is done in the words: 'Marius, with the aid of a local soldier, got his men up a rock supposed inaccessible to troops, and took a Numidian hill fort.' Now, the great point about this passage, apart from the fact that it contains a remarkably vivid and detailed account of a practised climber leading a party of novices, lies in the fact that the leader on this expedition was not 'local' at all, for he is expressly stated to have been a Piedmontese and, as such, a born mountaineer, and perhaps the ancestor of Carrel or of Rey. In another passage Sir Frederick raises a laugh at the expense of an early climber for saying that 'walking on common ground' produces, as snow-walking does not, 'inflammatory effects' on the legs. This is a little hard, for is it not the experience of many that long road-walks blister and inflame their

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feet at first, whereas snow-walks of similar duration, owing perhaps to a slower pace, to a greater variety of attitude and tread, or to boots softened by moisture, seldom lead to any trouble of the kind? The history of the ice-axe and of mountain sickness is also discussed, though of the latter perhaps early instances, yet more striking and amusing, might have been adduced.

In many parts of Mr. Conway's instructive chapter on maps and guide-books, we seem to trace the sensitive editor of climbers' guides with the fear of his 'sensitive *clientèle*' before his eyes. They would find little to complain of except perhaps what is said about the prismatic compass; given two bearings, 'subtract the less from the greater and that gives you the measure of the angle between them.' In a sense this is always true; but when the difference of the two bearings exceeds 180° it may be very misleading. It is decidedly ungrateful of Mr. Conway to aver, as he does, that apart from the Alps and Norway, there exist no guide-books to any range of snow mountains in the world. The Pyrenees are generally reckoned as snow mountains, and Mr. Packe's guide to that range, specially intended for the use of mountaineers, appeared in 1867. Surely, too, 'Les Grandes Ascensions des Pyrénées' is a literary ancestor of the Pennine Guide, and was many years earlier in proving how severely practical a work may spring from a highly poetical nature.

One of the most interesting sections is that by Mr. Douglas Freshfield. It is an admirable summary for the bold explorer of fields open to the mountaineer who is also a geographer. Before, however, any such explorer starts for Norway in search of Jökulls, he is recommended to call at 1, Savile Row, and inquire whether they have gone back to Iceland, or think of prolonging their tour in the direction of Russia or elsewhere.

Mr. Charles Pilkington gives us two chapters, both admirably done. He treats the delicate question of guideless climbing with great tact and ability, while his remarks on climbing in our own islands not only supply a most useful list of localities, but show clearly and persuasively how, by laying to heart the lessons which may be drawn from our humble hills, 'home-keeping youths' may improve their 'homely wits' up to an almost Alpine level.*

Mr. Mathews' recollections form the most eloquent chapter in the book. He brings before us one by one many of the giant figures who fostered scientific mountaineering from its cradle to its glorious manhood. He tells too in glowing language of the great guides who made these things possible, and ends with a solemn chant in praise of the great mountains and the golden memories of them which shed a lustre on our lives.

Mr. Willink suggests some very practical ideas on rough sketching,

* In this connection we would suggest to the editor of the 'Oesterreichische Alpen-Zeitung,' that if he thinks the Cumberland and Skye mountains are of the same sort as the 'Alpine Kindergarten' at Mödling, he should come over here some Easter and make their acquaintance. Many members of the Club will be proud to show him round.



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many of which would not otherwise occur to the mind of a beginner. This is, however, more than can be said for the direction that the sun may be depicted by 'a round circle in the sky.' Even unassisted infancy would hardly depict the sun anywhere but in the sky, or by any symbol other than a circle, or by a circle that was not at least intended to be 'round.'

It is impossible to part from Mr. Willink without saying something of the illustrations which are so brilliant a feature of the book. The artist, be it said, has 'learned some wit.' A careful study of both his drawings and his jokes will give, on the balance, intense enjoyment. Higher praise to the artist, as such, could hardly be given. His knowledge of the human figure in action is wonderfully complete. Even though now and again we miss the professional artist's precision in rendering the minutiæ of the frame, on the other hand he has what the professional artist would probably not have, an accurate acquaintance with points of technical detail. In a hundred sketches ere now he has shown his perfect command of all the delicate touches by which mere attitude can be made eloquent in the expression of character and of purpose. Instances of these qualities abound in the present work, and some of the smallest sketches are among the most choice. How full of life and variety is 'A Moot Point!' What *élan* there is in 'Experience does it!' They are as perfect in their way as the violence and cold of 'The Pass in Sight,' the endurance which is almost enjoyment in 'British Hill Weather,' or the pathos in 'Auf Wiedersehen.' 'Kommen Sie nur!' is a little spoilt by the fact that the climber is 'stuck,' though assisted both fore and aft, and yet the slope just behind him, which he must have crossed almost unaided, could be hardly possible for anyone. The transformation of the 'Wilderwurm Gletscher' into a dragon is very clever; but why should those strange goat's feet do duty for rocks near the camp on the 'Beispielspitz'?

Coming at last to the work of the editor himself, it must be admitted that he had by far the most difficult part of the book to write. It is the practical part; the part where mistakes are most easy alike of commission and of detection, where information derived from many diverse sources has to be harmoniously blended, where, lastly, inaccuracy is not to be atoned for by epigram. It may be added that, being also the part which will be most eagerly read by foreigners, it required to be written in English at once intelligible and pure. These requirements are fairly well met, yet there are such phrases as 'cut steps *off* a shoulder,' and one or two truly remarkable words, such as 'decantered,' while in one passage on p. 188 it is difficult to find any coherence, except on the supposition that 'smoothest' is used as the contrary of 'steepest,' and on p. 173 there is a most obscure sentence about 'the disengaged leg' in step-cutting. Sometimes the love of emphasis and paradox leads to curious exaggerations. We are told in one place that the iron of which the ice-axe is made must be soft enough to be—not merely scratched but—cut by an ordinary penknife. Fancy sharpening the pick of your axe like a cedar pencil, or cutting off an inch or two if you found it unfashionably long!

All great men have their weaknesses. Mr. Dent wants a theory for

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everything, and is never happy till he gets it. Sometimes his readers could be almost happy with a little less theory than he gives them. They could be content to practise mountaineering without regarding it as a branch of golf, and to choose an axe for the prosaic reason that it will cut a good step careless of the proportion it bears to a 'driver' or a 'niblick.' Yet theory and scientific language are a great matter, and can clothe with a dignity not its own the simplest operation and the simplest object. When a man is standing upright his foot has a small bearing. How poor and thin is this compared with the more majestic phrase, 'the weight of his body is transmitted through a small area of contact.' Again, a common person would say 'leans on a stick,' but the really impressive phrase is, 'has the base of support converted into a tripod,' and it is as instructive as it is impressive, for we should only have expected either the base to become a triangle, or the man himself a tripod. These startling effects sometimes involve the use of foot-notes, *e.g.* on p. 87, where 'vital capacity' is used in the text in order to be explained in the note as medical English for 'lung-capacity.' Perhaps no great harm would be done in the next edition if 'lung-capacity' went into the text qualified by a note to say that, if required, a much less appropriate term may be found in common medical text-books.

On p. 69 an axe-head is described in language of such scientific precision that the passage reads like one of Plato's mathematical metaphors translated by Bohn. It raises questions suitable for a prize competition during, say, a week of bad weather at an Alpine centre. What does a pick look like when 'its edges are turned upwards and downwards'? What is the 'central axis' of a pick? What is the 'radius line,' and is it the same thing as the circumference? This is hardly the place in which to touch on matters of opinion, such as the statements that 'it is far easier to cut steps down than up,' that 'a man absolutely alone ought to find no greater difficulty in going down a particular passage [of rock] than in going up it,' that 'finish' is a more valuable quality than 'brilliancy,' and not the same thing. Let each man have his own view. It is more to the purpose to point out actual oversights, such as that on p. 257, where the account of 'Alpargatas' (misspelt both here and in the index 'Aspargatas') requires correction. They are the Spanish and probably the earlier form of the French 'espadrilles.' Both have soles of rope or hemp, and 'uppers,' if any, of canvas, certainly not of jute.

On p. 396 we are told that the 'dáterâm' principle is not applicable, but we are not told what that principle is. Similarly 'a luxurious "boule" may be made by filling a wine bottle,' but no hint is given to the unhappy novice what to do with this luxury, and he might ultimately seek to drown his despair by emptying that which he is thus vainly told to fill. There is a glossary which might have been made most valuable. It is not worth much. It is incomplete; even 'crevasse' is not defined. Some of the definitions given are loose or mutually incompatible. The system of types is not uniform, and there are errors. The Gaelic for 'pass' is not 'balloch,' but 'beallach,' 'Roches moutonnées' are described, but the name might have been explained.

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Enough has now been said to show that the book is not free from blemishes, but let it be clearly understood that the merits of it far outweigh the defects. This is one of the cases where fault-finding is the best tribute of admiration, and it is impossible to go carefully through this book, as most of us either have done or will do, without being very deeply impressed with a sense of the industry, zeal, and knowledge which it displays, and of the grasp and ability with which it has been put together. The whole Alpine world owes a debt of gratitude to everyone who has had a share in the work, and especially to its able editor.

*Climbers' Guides: Dauphiny Central Alps.* By W. A. B. Coolidge, H Duhamel; and F. Perrin. *Chain of Mont Blanc.* By Louis Kurz. *Lepontine Alps.* By W. M. Conway and W. A. B. Coolidge. (Fisher Unwin. Each 10*s.*)

*Maps of the Dauphiny Alps.* By H. Duhamel. (3*s.* 6*d.*)

These charming little books have already (as a careful student of this year's New Routes will easily discover) become 'books which no [climbing] gentleman's library should be without'; and they well deserve it. How far the title which they actually bear represents the chief service which they are likely to render, is a point perhaps open to question. We have heard climbers who have used them say that in the matter of indicating the route a good map does all that these minute verbal directions can do, and more, and our own experience of similar works leads us to draw the same conclusion. But as an index to every detail of the history of mountaineering in the respective districts, and still more as 'companions' to the maps, they are invaluable. Nor do we feel disposed to quarrel with a certain want of uniformity which is observable, but rather to accept all extra information, if we may so call it, gratefully. For instance, the 'Dauphiny' Guide gives a list of guides—the others do not. That gives the heights above the sea for huts, but not for inns. The Mont Blanc Guide gives them for both; the Lepontine Guide for neither. Sometimes metres only are given; sometimes feet only; sometimes both. In the Lepontine Guide Mr. Coolidge gives an interesting little ethnological chapter, but nothing of the kind appears in the others.

As might perhaps be expected Dauphiné (Dauphiny is good English, of course, but a little out of date for general use) is perhaps, of all the districts, that which has received the most affectionate treatment; and the fact that it is accompanied by M. Duhamel's beautiful little maps, on a scale of 1 : 100,000, makes it incomparably the most useful work of the series. We hope that in course of time the editors will see their way to providing a similar 'help-meet' for each of the other volumes.

Now that the series is fairly under way, we shall look forward with much interest to the regular appearance of future parts.

*Itinéraire général de la France.* Par Paul Joanne. *Corse.* 4 cartes et 2 plans. (Paris: Librairie Hachette et C^ie^, 1892.)

It seems strange that Corsica, one of the most interesting islands of Europe, and certainly the most beautiful—though Sicily, of course,

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surpasses it in historical and architectural, not to mention volcanic, attractions—should have been visited by so few English mountaineers or pedestrians. Perhaps its reputation as a health resort has somewhat obscured its claims as a 'playground,' which have been also very tardily recognised by our brethren of the Club Alpin Français. At any rate, I do not remember any recorded visits in the pages of this Journal, with the exception of those of the Rev. W. H. Hawker, Messrs. Freshfield, and myself, though Mr. Compton's pencil has effectively chronicled his experiences from an artistic point of view. Mr. Lear's delightful volume must be familiar to many. We have all endeavoured to make known the varied and surpassing charm of this lovely land, its noble peaks, superb forests, and romantic coast scenery, combining many of the varied beauties of the Alps, Italy, and Greece. But converts to our enthusiasm have remained conspicuous by their rarity.

The access is abundantly easy, either viâ Marseilles, Nice, or Leghorn, and the terrors of sea-sickness could hardly be a serious deterrent to our countrymen if they but realise the attractions that await them across a narrow strip of sea. The newly issued index to this Journal shows several references to the subject, and at page 330 of vol. x. will be found a general and pretty comprehensive itinerary, which may be useful as a suggestion.

Under these circumstances the appearance of a new and greatly enlarged and improved edition of Joanne's guide to Corsica, edited by M. H. Boland, will, I hope, prove welcome and opportune to all classes of intending visitors to the island. In its present form it comprises 63 pages of introductory matter and 180 of text, as compared with 35 and 135 respectively in the previous edition by M. Sequentre, who died in 1891. Articles have been added on the Geography and History, and a specially interesting and novel one on Sport, in which will be found a valuable classified list of nearly fifty localities, with the game and fish to be found in their neighbourhood. This has been carefully compiled with the assistance of the Gardes forestiers, local sportsmen, and Government officials. To the four excellent maps—one general and three special—have been added two very clear plans of Ajaccio and Bastia, and the whole arrangement of the twenty-two main routes has been recast and largely added to. The volume now forms a very complete and detailed guide to the island, and the information it contains proves, wherever I have tested it, to be full, accurate, and clearly arranged. F. F. T.

*Australische Reise.* Von R. v. Lendenfeld. Mit Illustrationen. (Innsbruck: Verlag der Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung. 1892 (pp. 325).

Herr v. Lendenfeld's handsome volume is a welcome addition to the literature of Australasian travel, very pleasant and interesting reading. His style is bright and lively, and his matter varied enough to suit all tastes, though those of the mountaineer and investigator of Nature are most fully ministered to. The author writes with all the fulness of knowledge gained by five years' residence in Australia and New Zealand, and, although he has already given to the world in other publications the scientific results of his work, this comprehensive and popular

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summary will be acceptable to many, embellished as it is with a score or more of illustrations, mostly based on his own photographs, and including one very fine one of Mt. Cook (Aorangi), to which it is pleasant to see the name of Mr. E. Compton attached.

To the lover of Natural History, sketches of the kangaroo, dingo, wombat, 'Laughing jackass,' and other birds, including the Kea (*Nestor notabilis*), will be of special interest, whilst for the geologist are provided some important and thoughtful discussions on such subjects as the former glaciation of Australia, the influence of the primæval forest on its climate, and the glacial origin of the western 'Sounds' of New Zealand. In this connection it may perhaps be here mentioned that the existence of glaciers in prehistoric times, in more than one Australian mountain-group, down at least to a level of 1,000 mètres above the sea, seems to be satisfactorily proved, and that the author, after a discussion with Dr. Heim, leans to the conclusion that the western 'Sounds' of New Zealand are largely due to the erosive action of glacier ice—a view which I confess that I find it hard to accept, though the reasoning by which it is supported is ingenious.

From a mountaineering point of view, however, in which the readers of this Journal are presumed to be more especially interested, the most attractive chapters will probably be those narrating the ascent of 'Müller's Peak' (2,215 m.), and the first one ever effected of Mount Townshend (2,241 m.), the highest known elevation in Australia, and the culminating point of the various summits of Mt. Kosciusko in the south of New South Wales, together with the subsequent one describing expeditions on the Alps of New Zealand in 1883, the year after Mr. Green's visit. During the five weeks devoted to this object, besides the production of a valuable map of the basin of the Tasman glacier, Herr v. Lendenfeld accomplished, in company with his wife and a Scotch shepherd, the first actual complete ascent of a first-class peak in the Southern Alps, that of the Hochstetter Dome, of which he gives a very spirited description and a striking illustration. It proved a somewhat hard nut to crack, and his success, which cost 27 hrs. of almost continual exertion, reflects credit alike on the skill and pluck of himself and his companions. Other minor expeditions—such as the ascent of the Lindagrat, named in compliment to Mrs. Green—are pleasantly described, and the usual, and by no means uncalled-for plaints are uttered over the miseries of dragging provisions, a stove and other impedimenta over the endless moraines of the great Tasman glacier, or through the prickly scrub which opposes the traveller's progress. Still, the general tone is cheery; difficulties and discomforts are made the best of, and the reader will find our author a very pleasant companion alike on ice and rock or in camp-life, and a very well-informed and suggestive one on a variety of points of scientific interest.

F. F. T.

*Katechismus für Bergsteiger.* Von Julius Meurer. (Leipzig: Weber.)

'Equipment' seems to be in the air. Almost simultaneously with the appearance of the report of our own committee, Herr Meurer con-

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tributed to the encyclopædic series, which for some inscrutable reason Messrs. Weber call 'Catechisms,' a work dealing with the same subject. It is only fair to say that besides equipment he gives good advice all round as to behaviour towards guides, dangers, 'first aid' to the wounded, and so on; but the equipment and provisioning of mountaineers forms the kernel of the book. A good deal of it appeared in a volume which was reviewed in this Journal ten years ago,* 'Handbuch des Alpinen-Sport.' We are rather sorry to see that he speaks with approbation, or at least toleration, of what may be called the 'guide's knot' for the inferior places in the rope—that, we mean, which is produced by tying the double rope in a single knot as one rope, putting the resulting loop round the body, and tightening up the knot (see Fig. IV. of the report on ropes in vol. i., where this knot is strongly condemned). On the subject of feeding, we cannot agree with Herr Meurer's preference of fowls to bacon. The Alpine fowl, in proportion to the amount of food which he supplies, probably occupies more space than any other form of provision; and what he does supply is by no means of a kind to repair the waste caused by active exercise. Bacon, at all events in the German Alps, can nearly everywhere be got good, and the peculiar mode of smoking adopted gives it a very pleasant flavour. A more serious error on the author's part seems to us to be the recommendation of saccharin as an excellent substitute for sugar. Surely the use of sugar to mountaineers does not depend on its sweet taste, and the desire for it corresponds to a natural demand of the system, which will not be satisfied by any product of coal-tar. This quite apart from the fact that the sweetness of saccharin is to many people nauseous.

Most of Herr Meurer's counsels and 'wrinkles' will be familiar to old hands, but every year sees so many new hands in the Alps, particularly the German Alps, that no one can say a handbook of this kind is needless—if only the new hands will read it.

*The Forest Cantons of Switzerland.* By J. Sowerby. (Percival & Co.)

Though this little book deals more with social and political history than with mountaineering matters, it demands notice in this Journal on several grounds. In the first place the author is an old member of the Club, and one whose contributions to these pages have extended over many years. Secondly, the book will probably find many readers among mountaineers, if, as we hope, there are many who care to know something more about the district in which they climb than the heights of the peaks and the names of the inns. For these, Mr. Sowerby's little book, with its epitome of everything knowable about the cantons which form the nucleus of the present Swiss Federation, will be, as it is meant to be, just the companion they need. Lastly, Mr. Sowerby has brought himself fairly within our sphere by including a chapter on mountain exploration. The highest point in the district with which the book deals is the Dammastock (11,918 ft.), the best known and the slightly lower Galenstock. Both these, and, indeed, the great majority of the peaks

* See *Alpine Journal*, xi. 54.

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in the district, were first attained by Swiss climbers, with whom Canton Uri has always been a favourite ground. That it is hardly yet exhausted appears from Herr Seelig's communication on p. 270 of the present number.

But the main interest of the book is, as we have said, in the compressed information which it gives as to the various matters connected with the history of the cantons. Constitutional history, manners and customs, literature, are all treated of, and the natural features, geology, botany, and so on, thrown in. Anecdotes lighten the story. We read, for instance, how Gersau (which from 1431 to 1818, save for a short interval in the Napoleonic times, was an independent member of the Confederation) once possessed a gallows of its own. 'The men of Lucerne once by night hung a straw man on this gallows; but the men of Gersau, discovering the perpetrators, dressed it in blue and white, the Lucerne colours. This led to a lengthy quarrel, which was at last settled by the men of Gersau taking off the clothes, and the men of Lucerne removing the figure.'

Doubtless owing to the author's residence abroad, there are rather too many traces of defective revision. Misprints in names abound, and in one place we find 'Neuchâtel' and 'Neuenburg' on the same page. It is to be hoped that the plan, which we understand was at one time entertained, of following up this book with a series of similar works on the other cantons, is not wholly abandoned. It really is high time that we should have in English some easily accessible book of general information about a country to which so many English people go, rather more up to date than the work of the excellent Archdeacon Coxe.

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